



# 2000 Pre-Session Survey

Representative  
**Sharon Tomiko Santos**

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

This summer I've worked hard to tackle the issues that affect our families and communities in the 37<sup>th</sup> District, from strengthening our public education system to expanding small business opportunities and jobs in our neighborhoods. I've talked with educators, local business owners, neighborhood representatives and community-based non-profit organizations throughout our District to seek grassroots input and ideas for improving our quality of life. But, most of all, I want to hear from you.

The survey I've enclosed summarizes the priorities of the House Democratic Caucus and of the five task forces we formed to examine the important issues facing our State. I was appointed co-facilitator for the Strong Schools Task Force and I served on the Good Jobs Task Force as well. The other three Task Forces focused on Secure Families, a Healthy Environment, and Responsive Government. Collectively, these issue groupings are the foundation of the House Democrats' overall commitment to Work Together for One Washington.

The purpose of the Task Forces is to bring the many stakeholders together, to jointly identify the key priorities, and then to collaboratively develop solutions to our problems. The House Democrats recognize this is a new approach to policymaking, but we know that — oftentimes — the people who are most affected by a problem usually have the best ideas for solutions. The participation and testimonies of the stakeholders were invaluable to helping us shape our legislative agenda for the 2000 Session and beyond.

I'd like to know what you think about these priorities. Please take a moment to review this survey and to send me your comments and opinions. Perhaps you'll agree with the issues we've identified as our top priorities but may have different ideas for solutions. Or, you may want to suggest concrete examples of how your local school or neighborhood successfully tackled an issue. Whatever your concern or comment, there is nothing more important to me than to hear directly from you.

Thank you very much for your time and interest in sharing your thoughts with me. I look forward to reading your responses and bringing your ideas to Olympia.

Sincerely,

Sharon Tomiko Santos  
State Representative  
37<sup>th</sup> District



## Keeping in Touch District office:

1265 South Main Street Suite 310, Seattle WA 98144

### Phone:

(206) 720-3056

### E-mail:

santos\_sh@leg.wa.gov

# 2000

## Pre-Session Survey

### Strong Schools

**Our schools should be – and can be – the best in the nation. How can we improve the education our children receive, make schools safer, and ensure that all students are ready to learn?**

#### Problems

(please mark your top two choices)

- ☐ Some schools are thriving but others are failing.
- ☐ Schools are crowded or using temporary trailers for classrooms.
- ☐ I'm worried about drugs and violence at schools, especially after all these shootings.
- ☐ It's hard for parents to get involved with their children's education, or have time to stay involved.
- ☐ Good teachers are leaving the profession.
- ☐ High school graduates aren't prepared for the working world.
- ☐ College costs too much and my family can't afford it.
- ☐ Other problems \_\_\_\_\_

#### Possible solutions

(mark top two choices)

- ☐ Create a professional standards board to support quality teaching.
- ☐ Support teachers with tuition assistance and meaningful compensation.
- ☐ Expand all-day kindergarten and early learning programs for parents who want to give their children a head start.
- ☐ Improve discipline in the classroom.
- ☐ Start violence prevention programs aimed at young children.
- ☐ Reward teachers who earn national certification.
- ☐ In the early grades, put students in small classes.
- ☐ Boost the state funding for building local schools.
- ☐ Get schools to work closely with businesses to prepare students for work.
- ☐ Expand the Promise Scholarship program so every student who works hard and gets good grades can afford college tuition.
- ☐ Your ideas \_\_\_\_\_

### Legislative priorities

The Strong Schools Task Force identified three priorities to support successful students and schools: Quality Teaching, Safe and Smaller Schools, and Family and Community Involvement. Do you have any comments or ideas about these priorities? \_\_\_\_\_

### Secure Families

**Nothing is more important than our children and families. We deserve to feel secure about our health care and safe from crime in our neighborhoods.**

#### Problems (mark top two choices)

- ☐ Health insurance companies make all the decisions, not families and their doctors.
- ☐ High-quality childcare is impossible to find, or costs too much.
- ☐ With long hours at work and long commutes, working parents don't have any time for their families.
- ☐ Kids are getting into trouble after school with crime, smoking, drugs, or sex.
- ☐ Other problems \_\_\_\_\_

#### Possible solutions

(mark top two choices)

- ☐ A strong Patients' Bill of Rights to make sure families are treated fairly and honestly by insurance companies.
- ☐ Give more families access to early learning programs like Head Start and improving the child care system.
- ☐ Help schools and communities set up out-of-school activities for all students to make the time between the school bell and dinner bell productive, not destructive.
- ☐ Focus on prevention and intervention efforts for youth rather than waiting until it's too late.
- ☐ Your ideas \_\_\_\_\_

### Legislative priorities

The Secure Families Task Force picked two top priorities for next session: a Patients' Bill of Rights and crime prevention programs that target children. Do you have any comments or ideas about these priorities? \_\_\_\_\_

## Responsive Government

**When we need help or information, it should be easy to get a real person on the phone who will listen to us and respond to our concerns.**

### Problems (mark top two choices)

- ☐ It's hard to know which agency to contact when I need help.
- ☐ Even if I know where to turn, I can't find the right phone number.
- ☐ When I call a government office, I get voice mail instead of an actual person.
- ☐ Too much paperwork and red tape.
- ☐ State, city and county governments don't work together.
- ☐ Other problems \_\_\_\_\_

### Possible solutions (mark top two choices)

- ☐ Create a single 1-800 number that helps callers get to the right agency.
- ☐ Start ombudsman's offices in all major state agencies to handle public requests.
- ☐ Require that names and phone numbers go on all agency websites and letters.
- ☐ Reform the civil service rules to allow greater flexibility and responsiveness to the public.
- ☐ Your ideas \_\_\_\_\_

### Legislative priorities

The Responsive Government Task Force picked customer service as the Number One priority for next session. Do you have any comments or ideas about this issue? \_\_\_\_\_

## Healthy Environment

**Washington's families deserve clean air and water, oil-free coasts and well-maintained parks. We must find a balance between growth, jobs and protecting our environment.**

### Problems (mark top two choices)

- ☐ Our transportation networks are inefficient and poorly equipped to handle current capacities, leading to gridlock and air pollution.
- ☐ Accidents with oil supertankers and gas pipelines can – and have – happened.

- ☐ Our booming economy has led to unchecked growth, disappearing forests and farmlands, more traffic, pollution and garbage.
- ☐ We are running out of sources for clean drinking water and irrigation for farms.
- ☐ State parks are in high demand but funding for parks maintenance is diminishing.
- ☐ Invasive species of plants and animals, such as the European green crab, are disrupting and destroying natural, native ecosystems.
- ☐ Other problems \_\_\_\_\_

### Possible solutions (mark top two choices)

- ☐ Reform the safety rules for oil supertankers and pipelines to prevent future tragedies.
- ☐ Dedicate the camper-trailer tax to fund parks.
- ☐ Find ways to combat invasive species.
- ☐ Boost mass transit, carpooling, telecommuting and other ways of fighting highway gridlock.
- ☐ Build more highways.
- ☐ Reform the way water is managed.
- ☐ Your ideas \_\_\_\_\_

### Legislative priorities

The Healthy Environment Task Force picked three top issues for next session: protection against invading non-native species of plants and animals that wreck our ecosystem and fishing industry; improved safety to prevent oil spills on our coast and pipeline leaks or explosions on land; and better funding for our state parks. Do you have any comments or ideas about these priorities? \_\_\_\_\_

## Good Jobs

**Good jobs and a strong economy go hand in hand. While high-tech opportunities have contributed to the prosperity of our region, jobs that require traditional labor skills are disappearing. No one should be left behind in Washington's new economy.**

### Problems (mark top two choices)

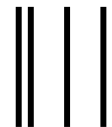
- ☐ Some areas of the state are booming, but some inner-city and rural economies struggle with high unemployment and a shortage of good jobs.
- ☐ The ever-changing and fast-paced new economy requires workers to change careers often and to continually learn and re-learn job skills.

*continued on back*

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_



Please  
place  
33¢  
stamp  
here



Representative  
**Sharon Tomiko Santos**

P O Box 40600  
320 John L. O'Brien Bldg.  
Olympia WA 98504-0600

- Mainstay industries of our state economy – aerospace, timber, and fish – have laid off thousands of workers who aren’t able to transfer their job skills in the new economy.
- Too many jobs don’t provide basic benefits such as health coverage or retirement.
- Unnecessary obstacles hinder entrepreneurs and out-of-state companies from starting or relocating businesses in Washington

**Possible Solutions**  
(mark top two choices)

- Retrain laid-off workers with job skills that lead to long-term careers in the new economy rather than temporary jobs

- Recruit and retain businesses that provide good family-wage jobs with real benefits
- Improve access to practical education and training programs so workers can maintain and upgrade their job skills
- Create incentives for investments in communities that have high unemployment and a shortage of jobs.
- Your ideas \_\_\_\_\_

**Legislative priorities**

The Good Jobs Task Force picked two top issues for the next session: Recruit and retain businesses in Washington state that provide family wage jobs, and improve the availability of education and training opportunities to all workers. Do you have any comments or ideas about these issues? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

BULK RATE  
U. S. POSTAGE PAID  
Washington State  
Department of Printing

Representative  
**Sharon Tomiko Santos**  
P O Box 40600  
320 John L. O'Brien Bldg.  
Olympia WA 98504-0600  
Printed on recycled paper  
**2000**  
**Pre-Session**  
**Survey**